

1. An article transport, meterer and loader comprising:
  - a plurality of parallel article lanes disposed in vertical relation above and in angular relation to a direction of orientation of a plurality of parallel conveyors, said plurality of parallel conveyors including
    - 5 a first article infeed conveyor operating at a first linear speed;
    - a second metering conveyor operating at a second linear speed having a plurality of transverse metering lugs disposed at article intervals; and
    - a third grouping conveyor operating at a third linear speed having a plurality of transverse grouping lugs disposed at predetermined group intervals;
  - 10 wherein said first linear speed is greater than said third linear speed and said second linear speed is less than said first linear speed;
    - whereby articles are metered from said first article infeed conveyor by said second metering conveyor into article arrays passing between respective said transverse grouping lugs and subsequently urged from said third grouping conveyor in said array.
2. The invention of claim 1, wherein the angle of said angular relationship is about 18.7 degrees.
- 20 3. The invention of claim 1, wherein said second linear speed is less than said third linear speed.
4. The invention of claim 1, wherein said second linear speed is substantially equal to said third linear speed.
- 25 5. The invention of claim 1, wherein said plurality of parallel article lanes are selectively engageable.
6. The invention of claim 1, wherein said second linear speed is variable.

7. An article transport and meterer comprising:
  - a plurality of selectively engageable parallel article lanes disposed in vertical relation above and in angular relation to a direction of orientation of a pair of parallel conveyors including,
  - 5 a first article infeed conveyor operating at a first linear speed; and
  - a second metering conveyor operating at a second linear speed which may be varied having a plurality of transverse metering lugs disposed at article intervals;
  - wherein said second linear speed may be selectively set to a predetermined speed less than or equal to said first linear speed;
  - 10 whereby articles are urged from said first article infeed conveyor by said second metering conveyor to positions adjacent said metering conveyor in a predetermined spacing from one another.